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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [EAID](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [IT](#) [NATO](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY/AFGHANISTAN: KIDNAPPING CHILLS ASSISTANCE
COMMUNITY, G8 REGIONAL DIALOGUE, CIVILIANS IN PRTS

REF: A) STATE 91032 B) STATE 82968 C) MAY 18
MOELLER-BROWN-THIEDE E-MAIL

Classified By: A/POLMIN PAULA THIEDE, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a May 23 meeting, Italy's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Minister Anna Della Croce, worried that the kidnapping of the Italian CARE International worker might chill humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan. Della Croce and Italy's G8 Sous-Sherpa told us Italy fully supports the G8 Regional Dialogue for Afghanistan. Della Croce also thought Italy could support reporting civilian staffing to NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). She said continuation of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan's mandate in Afghanistan was crucial, inter alia for judicial reform efforts. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Poloff met Della Croce on May 23 to discuss a range of issues. Della Croce said actions to free kidnapped Italian CARE International worker, Clementina Cortona, were being handled by "other offices," but the Italian Government was frustrated by the lack of progress. She said U.S. cooperation and support were appreciated. Della Croce worried that the kidnapping would have a chilling effect on humanitarian efforts and could make it harder to staff the civilian components of PRTs. Assistance workers used to complain that the overall security presence in Afghanistan was too much, Della Croce commented, but now they are asking for more security. She reported "panic" in the NGO community and wondered whether Italy's Herat PRT and others would be able to provide enough security.

3. (C) Poloff shared Ref A points on G8 Regional Dialogue with Della Croce, who was surprised by their classification. Noting that the UK had briefed on the proposal at the May 12-14 conference in Wilton Park, England, Della Croce said it was a "very sound idea," but Italy hoped it would also be a realistic one. There were many references to Pakistan and Iran, she noted, but what about Afghanistan's other neighbors?

4. (C) Econoff also raised Ref A points with Italy's G-8 Sous-Sherpa Massimo Leggeri. Leggeri stated that the GOI was "very much in favor" of the proposed Afghan regional dialogue. He cautioned that economic issues must be viewed in the context of recovering peace and security, which must remain the priority in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Leggeri said Italy was ready to "participate constructively" in such a dialogue and he predicted the issue would be discussed at the upcoming sherpa meeting in London.

5. (C) Poloff also discussed with Della Croce the issue of reporting civilian staffing and functions to NATO PRTs (Refs B, C). She shared with Della Croce the language under discussion at NATO, per Ref C e-mail. Della Croce reviewed the language and said she saw no reason for Italy not to support it. She promised to call the Italian delegation in Brussels. (Comment: We are not sure if Della Croce can give the final instructions on this issue. Although it affects Afghanistan, it also falls under the purview of the MFA's NATO office. End Comment.)

6. (C) Della Croce said that Italy considers renewal of UNAMA's mandate in Afghanistan crucial, especially in terms of continued judicial reform efforts. Italy is pleased with the framework of cooperation it is developing with the UN for judicial reform, but to make further progress, it is important that UNAMA be kept at least at its current level, nothing less.

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